

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #50

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, August 5 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be OPEN during this commercial fishing period. The last day of sonar operation at Miles Lake for the 2013 season was July 27. The cumulative sonar count through July 27 was 1.27 million fish whereas the anticipated inriver passage range for this date is 695,308–1,067,794 fish. For the week ending July 20, the actual Copper River Delta survey index count was 59,200 versus an anticipated range of 31,424–75,775 sockeye salmon. The preliminary harvest estimate for the fishing period that closed Tuesday, July 30 was 500 sockeye, 100 pink, and 70 coho salmon with 4 deliveries reported. The cumulative Copper River District commercial harvest to date is 1.58 million sockeye salmon and 2,800 coho salmon.

The Copper River District is open to subsistence fishing concurrent with commercial fishing periods until closed at the end of the season. Subsistence permits may be obtained during regular business hours. The Cordova ADF&G office is open to the public Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm. **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.**

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, August 5 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. For the week ending July 20, the actual Bering River District survey index count was 22,150 versus a minimum anticipated range of 11,004–24,208 sockeye salmon. No harvest was reported for the commercial fishing period that closed Tuesday, July 30.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District will open to commercial gillnet fishing for a 14-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Monday, August 5. The AGZ will open to DRIFT GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period. Additionally, the Main Bay Hatchery SHA will open to commercial gillnet fishing for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Tuesday, August 6. The AGZ will open to SET GILLNET permit holders only during this fishing period. Harvest from the period that closed Wednesday, July 31 was 27,822 sockeye, 20 chum, 120 coho, and 2,300 pink salmon with 42 deliveries reported. Cumulative harvest through this date was 508,000 sockeye, 213,000 chum, 1,500 coho, and 57,000 pink salmon. Future openings will depend on pink salmon stream escapements and assessment of sockeye salmon run entry into Eshamy River.

SEINE FISHERIES: VFDA reports 500,000 to 600,000 pink salmon staged at SGH. VFDA's broodstock needs are approximately 346,000 pink salmon. Eggtakes are underway at SGH, with approximately 30% of the final goal completed through August 2. PWSAC completed its pink salmon cost recovery program on July 31. Final harvest numbers for the August 2 fishery in Prince William Sound are unavailable at the time of this announcement; however, it is estimated that at least 2.75 million pink salmon were harvested. Fishery participants are reminded of 5 AAC 24.378, which states: "During open commercial salmon fishing periods no person may use an aircraft to locate salmon for the commercial taking of those fish or to direct commercial fishing operations."

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the Coghill District, including waters of the WNH SHA up to a line of buoys in front of the barrier net, will open to commercial DRIFT GILLNET and PURSE SEINE fishing for 14-hour fishing periods beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 4; Monday, August 5; and Tuesday, August 6.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour fishing periods beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 4; Monday, August 5; and Tuesday, August 6. Waters of Port Valdez east of 146° 23.00' W Long., will be closed to commercial fishing during these periods.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour fishing periods beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 4; Monday, August 5; and Tuesday, August 6.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, **excluding the CCH SHA**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour fishing periods beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 4; Monday, August 5; and Tuesday, August 6.

Waters inside of the following Northern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers are closed to commercial fishing during these periods:

- (1) Siwash Bay: west of a line from 60°58.26' N. lat., 147°37.32' W. long. to 60°56.96' N. lat., 147°36.02' W. long.;
- (2) Jonah Bay: west of a line from 61°01.17' N. lat., 147°35.07' W. long. to 61°00.40' N. lat., 147°35.93' W. long.;

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour fishing periods beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 4; Monday, August 5; and Tuesday, August 6.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour fishing periods beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 4; Monday, August 5; and Tuesday, August 6.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District, excluding the AFK Hatchery inner HEEZ, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for 14-hour fishing periods beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 4; Monday, August 5; and Tuesday, August 6. The inner HEEZ consists of the waters of the SHA west and south of a line from 60° 03.253 N lat, 148° 03.576' W long to 60° 02.889' N lat, 148° 03.644' W long. **Waters north of the latitude of Squire Point and west of the longitude of Herring Point will be closed to commercial fishing during these periods.**

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Tuesday, August 6.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.**

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an "intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering." (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.